



## COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICY

**Policy No. 4815** Date Issued: June 1, 1996  
4800 – Specific Procedures,  
Section: Continued Date Revised: February 22, 2021  
Accreditation Standards:

**SUBJECT: SEXUAL ASSAULT**

APPROVED: <signed copy on file>  
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Chairperson, Law Enforcement Users Subcommittee  
APPROVED: <signed copy on file>  
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Dennis Kidd, General Manager

### 1.0 Policy

Sexual assaults are serious felonious crimes. Victims can be extremely emotional and may be reluctant to report incidents. Dispatchers should also be aware that it is important that the crime scene and any evidence is secured from the time of the initial report.

### 2.0 Procedure

Determine if the caller is the victim. Always attempt to speak directly to the victim. When speaking to a victim of a sexual assault, remember that this is a highly traumatic experience. Always reassure the victim that the peace officers are there to help him/her, not to judge. Use care not to sound callous or judgmental; always be direct, professional and caring. Speak reassuringly; be sympathetic. As a matter of practice, and whenever possible, dispatchers should not broadcast sexual assault victims' names or telephone numbers on the radio. Dispatchers may transmit that information via cellular telephone or MDC.

#### **In-Progress or Occurred within the last 10 minutes**

- Injuries requiring immediate medical attention; fire or ambulance response
- Location of the incident

- Time Element
- Complete suspect(s) description
- Vehicle description - direction of travel
- Weapons involved
- Location of the victim

Always attempt to keep the victim on the telephone until an officer arrives on scene.

### **Cold Report**

- Obtain the same information as listed above.
- Advise the victim not to wash or change clothing.

### **Non-Investigative Exam (NIR)**

In some circumstances, survivors of sexual assault are not ready to proceed with a criminal investigation, but the need to preserve evidence still exists. In Santa Cruz County, there are SAFE (Sexual Assault Forensic Exam) nurses who are licensed, trained, and specialize in sexual assault forensic exams. If a victim survivor calls, create a call for service using SCSO headquarters as the incident address, and use PAGE for the incident type. Then use the SAFE on-call calendar to connect the victim survivor with the on-call SAFE nurse. Close the call using NOTIF. (Refer to Policy 4655/SO for more detailed information on SAFE)